

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEA-10 EA-10
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5275
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CINCEUR

CONFIDENTIAL NAIROBI 2762

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

BERN FOR AMBASSADOR WARNKE

DEPT PLS PASS INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, XO, KE, US, UR
SUBJECT: PRESS EDITORIAL CRITICIZES US-SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN
INDIAN OCEAN

1. LEAD EDITORIAL IN FEBRUARY 22 DAILY NATION LAMBASTED
RECENTLY CONCLUDED ROUND OF US-SOVIET TALKS ON INDIAN
OCEAN AND ATTACKED US AND SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN
INDIAN OCEAN.

2. EDITORIAL REPORTED THAT TALKS HAD ENDED WITHOUT
AGREEMENT ON ANYTHING. IT CHARACTERIZED AGENDA AS
VERGING ON CHILDISHNESS BECAUSE OF PREOCCUPATION WITH
WHAT WERE DESCRIBED AS "ELEMENTARY" FACTORS.

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3. EDITORIAL CLAIMED THAT TWO MAJOR POWERS MOVED
INTO AREA IN AFTERMATH OF BRITISH EAST OF SUEZ PULL-
BACK, EACH IN PURSUIT OF ITS PERCEIVED INTERESTS, BUT
THAT PRACTICAL RESULT WAS EXTENSION OF THEIR INTER-
NATIONAL RIVALRY INTO AREA. THIS WAS DESPITE FACT THAT
MOST INDIAN OCEAN NATIONS (SOMALIA EXCEPTED) HAVE

BOJECTED TO RUSSIAN AND US NAVAL PRESENCE IN AREA.
EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT "...IT IS ESTABLISHED FACT THAT
WHENEVER EITHER OF THESE POWERS HAVE MOVED INTO AN
AREA WHERE IT IS NOT GENERALLY WELCOME, CONFLICT
RESULTS BETWEEN THE TWO POWERS AND BETWEEN
COUNTRIES IN VICINITY."

4. EDITORIAL CONNLUDED THAT US AND SOVIET UNION
SHOULD MOVE OUT OF INDIAN OCEAN IN INTEREST OF
PEACE AND THAT INDIAN OCEAN NATIONS SHOULD THEN AGREE
THAT BIG POWER PRRESENCE IS UNDESIRABLE AND SHOULD ASK
THEM TO LEAVE.

5. COMMENT: GOK OFFICIALS IN MEDIA HAVE GIVEN PUBLIC
SUPPORT TO INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT SINCE
ITS INCEPTION. HOWEVER, IN PAST PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS
WITH EMBOFFS, SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT
KENYA REGARDED IT AS IMPORTANT THAT US NOT WITHDRAW
FROM INDIAN OCEAN ON UNILATERAL BASIS LEAVING NAVAL
PREDOMINANCE IN AREA TO SOVIET UNION. ON SEVERAL
OCCASIONS, PERMSEC IN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, WHO SITS
ON NATIONAL SECURIY COUNCIL WHILE FONMIN DOES NOT,
HAS EXPRESSED PRIVATELY GOK GRATITUDE FOR AND TACIT
APPROVAL OF US NAVAL PRESENCE IN AREA. MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE HAS FACILITATED USE OF MOMBASA PORT AND
NAIROBI/MOMBASA AIRFIELDS TO SUPPORT USN MIDEASTFOR
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AND CINCPACFLT P-3 FLIGHTS EMANATING FROM DIEGO GARCIA.

6. IN THIS CONTEXT, DAILY NATIONA EDITORIAL CAN BE
INTERPRETED AS OUT OF STEP WITH PREVAILING VIEW AT TOP
LEVEL OF GOK. BUT WE WERE STRUCK WITH EDITORIAL'S
RELATIVE STRIDENCY AND WITH JUXTAPOSITION ON EQUAL
BASIS OF US AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AREA. OVER PAST
FEW YEARS, KENYAN PRESS IN TREATMENT OF THIS GENERAL ISSUE
HAS CONVEYED VIEW THAT US PRESENCE IN DIEGO GARCIA WAS
IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET BASE AT
BERBERA, SOMALIA. ONUS FOR MILITARIZATION IN INDIAN
OCEAN HAS THEREBY BEEN LAID SQUARELY ON SOVIET UNION.
BUT GEOPOLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED IN THAT
SOVIET UNION IS NO LONGER IN BERBERA, AND IS NO LONGER
ARMING AND SUPPORTING SOMALIA, WHICH KENYA HAS ALWAYS
PERCEIVED AS A POTENTIAL THREAT. TO CONTRARY, SOVIET
UNION HAS BEEN EXERTING GREAT EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT
SOMALIA'S MILITARY DEFEAT. NOTION THAT FRIENDS OF OUR
(KENYA'S)FRIENDS SHOULD BE OUR FRIENDS AND FRIENDS OF
OUR (KENYA'S) ENEMIES SHOULD BE OUR ENEMIES HAS BEEN
GIVEN CURRENCY IN PAST WEEKS HERE, NOTABLY BY PROMINENT
WEEKLY REVIEW AND SUNDAY TIMES EDITOR, HILARY NG'WENO.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT COULD BE THAT THIS EDITORIAL
REPRESENTS GOK DESIRE FOR TIME BEING TO BE LESS OPENLY
PARTISAN ON ISSUES WITH EAST-WEST IMPLICATIONS SUCH AS
US-SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN.

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE.

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